

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-5. (Cancelled).

6. (currently amended): A process for producing a natural cheese, which comprises:

(1) adding a lactic acid bacteria starter to a ~~milk component~~ raw milk;

(2) forming a curd from the ~~milk component~~ raw milk mixed with the lactic acid bacteria starter;

(3) ~~processing thus formed curd to remove whey~~ removing whey from thus formed curd;

and

(4) forming pressed pieces of the curd,

wherein the process further comprises

adding an yeast extract to the ~~milk component~~ raw milk at the same time or after adding the lactic acid bacteria starter to the raw milk in step (1), and before formation of the curd in step (2); and

incubating the curd obtained in the above (4), at 20 to 35°C for 16 to 26 hours to produce the natural cheese,

wherein the lactic acid bacteria starter comprises a lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori*; and

wherein the natural cheese comprises the lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori*, wherein the natural cheese has a viable cell count of *Lactobacillus gasseri* in the number of 10⁷ cfu/g or more in the number of a viable count of 10⁷ cfu/g or more—when preserved at a temperature of 10°C or less for 6 months.

7. (original): The process according to claim 6, wherein the curd is incubated without being cooled after molding and pressing.

8. (canceled).

9. (previously presented): The process according to any one of claims claim 6, wherein thea lactic acid bacteria starter is a mixture of the lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori* and another strain of lactic acid bacteriumis added to raw milk as a starter.

10. (previously presented): The process according to any one of claims claim 6, wherein the lactic acid bacterium is *Lactobacillus gasseri* OLL 2716 (FERM BP-6999) or a mutant thereof.